

## Through a Bridge

AN ENTIRE PASSENGER TRAIN  
PLUNGED INTO A RIVER.

More Than Twenty Lives Lost.  
The Exact Number Unknown  
As the Wreckage Took

Fire and the Dead Bodies Were  
Entirely Consumed—One of the  
Survivors Says That the

Wreck Was the Work of Train  
Wreckers.

MEMPHIS, Dec. 28.—A special to The Commercial Appeal from Birmingham, Ala., says: Flaming in human form wrecked Birmingham Mineral passenger train No. 40 at Cahaba river bridge, 27 miles from here, at 7:50 o'clock yesterday morning and 20 lives were recovered. That number of bodies have been recovered from the wreck, and further search may swell the list of dead. The wreck is regarded as almost certainly accomplished by the removal of a rail on the middle span of the trestle. This derailed the train which caused it to fall down the two spans and precipitated it into the river, 100 feet below.

The wreck was the worst that has ever occurred in the state and the survivors are so few and are so badly hurt that they are unable to give any detailed description of how it all happened. It is not known and may never be ascertained, just how many passengers were on the train. Most of them were miners and residents of mining towns in this district who had round trip holiday tickets and were returning to their homes along the line of the Birmingham Mineral railroad.

Conductor A. P. Conell, who probably knew better than anybody else as to how many passengers were aboard, is dead. It is thought, however, that there were not exceeding 25 or 30. But one passenger purchased a ticket at Birmingham.

The following have so far been identified:

Frank White of Birmingham, engineer, aged 40, leaves a wife and five children.  
A. P. Conell of Helena, conductor, aged 36, leaves a wife and two children.  
George Carney of Birmingham, flagman, leaves a wife and child.  
James Bollard of Guthrie, Ky., Southern express messenger, aged 25.

Mrs. Henry Handberry of Birmingham and two children.  
R. Webb of Birmingham.  
Brace Phillips of Blocton.  
L. W. Martin, Brookport, Ala.  
R. H. Elliott of Birmingham, colored minister.

Dr. L. N. Powers of Blocton and his wife, Mrs. Emma Powers, and two children.  
Mrs. R. Little of Blocton.  
Mr. Gardner of Blocton and his wife and daughter.

One unidentified body, but supposed to be Tom Struther, a colored porter.

The ill-fated train was a local passenger which left here at 6:20 a. m. and was scheduled to make a circuit of the Birmingham Mineral, which is a branch line of the Louisville and Nashville, reaching all the important mining towns in the district. The train, consisting of an engine, baggage car and two coaches, left here at 6:30 a. m. and went to Tacoma, on the main line of the Louisville and Nashville. There it switched off to the Birmingham Mineral track and went to Gurnee, from Gurnee to Blocton. The Mineral trains operate over the Southern Railway's Birdfield, Blocton and Birmingham branch under a contract agreement.

Six miles south of Gurnee is the Cahaba river, a shallow, 1,000-foot stream which has a depth at this time of only about three or four feet. This river is spanned by an iron bridge with wooden trestles on each side. Its entire length is 500 feet and the length of the main span where the wreck occurred is 110 feet. The bridge was built only four years ago and was regarded as a very strong structure. The main span and the span just beyond it both made of iron, gave way and precipitated the train into the water. The engine landed on its side almost at right angles with the track. The cars piled upon each other through the main span. The entire wreck took five or six minutes and was rapidly burned to the water's edge. Nine persons alone escaped alive from all who went down and several of them will probably die.

The first news of the wreck was brought to Harrogate, a telegraph station four miles from the Cahaba river, by a farmer, who said that while passing near the place he heard a crash. Going nearer he saw the two spans of the bridge broken off. He then discovered the burning wreckage in the shallow water below. He could hear the screams of the wounded and dying, but without waiting to see further he rode his horse rapidly to Harrogate, where the operator telegraphed to Birmingham and Blocton for relief. Meanwhile a few country people gathered at the scene to render what aid they could, but it was too late to do much. Nine people had gotten out and the others had been burned in the wreckage.

When the relief train from Birmingham arrived there was little need for the aid of physicians that had gone along. The wounded were quickly attended to and then sent to Blocton for further attention. The work of taking out the dead was entered upon. Nothing was left of the wreckage but the smoldering remains which had burned to the water's edge. Charred corpses

were picked in between the iron framework where the seats had been. Most of the bodies had been burned beyond recognition. Some had their heads burned off and of others nothing was left but the mere skeleton. As rapidly as possible the remains were taken out and laid in a row on the river bank. At 4 o'clock 20 bodies had been found and no more were in sight. It is possible, however, that there are others under the wreckage and also that some may be hid by the water.

Of the survivors Sam Spencer was the only one of the train crew that escaped alive. He was the colored fireman. He jumped from the engine while it was in midair and landed in the water some distance from where the engine fell. His only injury was a broken arm. He left the scene for Blocton on foot immediately after the wreck, apparently crazed with fright. The railroad officials have not yet been able to see him and get a statement.

Of the eight other survivors three were children, all of whom had their feet burned and mangled, and a lady, who had both feet crushed. Their names have not yet been learned. The other three were Henry Handberry, a conductor from Birmingham, who was taking his wife and two children out for a ride around the circuit, and Will Gardner and Andrew Bryson, miners from Blocton. Handberry was on the same seat with his wife and children when the crash came. The latter three were killed and he was pinned down and would have been burned alive had he not been rescued by Bryson and Gardner. These two men also saved the unknown woman and their children who were likewise pinned and appealing piteously for help, but by the time they had rescued these five persons the heat had become so intense that they were compelled to desist in their work of rescue.

It is thought that fully three-fourths of the dead were killed outright in the crash while the others were pinned down and cremated. Gardner and Handberry were both badly hurt, while Handberry will probably die.

The flames had completed the work of destruction before any help arrived. The country around the scene of the accident is sparsely settled and the few farmers who lived of the wreck and went to the scene arrived too late to be of any assistance except to the survivors.

Dr. Ray, a Blocton physician who attended Gardner, one of the injured survivors, told the following story of the wreck by Gardner as to the cause of the wreck. Gardner says when he felt the crash he looked out and saw three savage-looking men rushing from a hiding place down toward the water's edge and after the wreck they went through the wreckage, robbing the dead and wounded, and then fled to the woods. They did their work quickly, and offered no assistance whatever in the way of rescuing the imprisoned and injured passengers. This story, however, has not yet been corroborated, but other facts tend to show that it was the work of train wreckers.

An examination of the engine shows that Engineer White had shut off the steam and reversed before it went down, indicating that he saw danger ahead as he approached the bridge, and tried to stop his train. His charred body was found with his hand on the throttle.

The survivors all agree that the train left the track and bumped along the ties and then with a crash plunged through the bridge. Expert engineers say that there is every indication that a rail was removed which derailed the train and caused it to pull down the bridge. The cross-ties, show marks of the wheels.

To add to this is the fact that three men tried to wreck a Southern railway train near Henry, Tenn., 15 miles away here, five days ago, by receiving a call on a trestle 90 feet high. The fast express left the track, but the engineer, by superhuman efforts managed to stop it before it tore down the trestle. This was regarded as a most remarkable escape. In this case three men were seen running from the place, and a crowbar with which the spikes had been withdrawn was found. The scenes of both accidents are in a wild, mountainous country.

**TWENTY-SEVEN DEAD BODIES.**  
The Cahaba Bridge Disaster Greater Than First Reported.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Dec. 28.—A relief train with Superintendent Frazier of the Southern road and eight trained physicians, nurses and supplies, has returned from the scene of the Blocton wreck with 27 bodies. The corpses are now at the several undertaking establishments in this city, awaiting identification. All of the bodies, however, are charred beyond recognition.

Another serious wreck occurred near Cahaba river bridge at 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon. A wrecking train, which had gone to the relief of the ill-fated passenger train, was starting on its line, when it was run into by a construction train from Birmingham, which was on its way with men and timbers to rebuild the destroyed Cahaba river bridge. Jim Estis of Boyles was here, five days ago, by receiving a call on a trestle 90 feet high. The fast express left the track, but the engineer, by superhuman efforts managed to stop it before it tore down the trestle. This was regarded as a most remarkable escape. In this case three men were seen running from the place, and a crowbar with which the spikes had been withdrawn was found. The scenes of both accidents are in a wild, mountainous country.

**FARMERS' GREAT MEETING.**  
Ohio Agricultural Convention and Institute to Be Held at Columbus.

COLUMBUS, O., Dec. 28.—Secretary Miller of the state board of agriculture has just announced the program for the annual state agricultural convention and institute farmers' institute, which will be held here Jan. 12, 13 and 14, the first days being devoted to the institute and the closing day to the agricultural convention proper.

The sessions are to be held in the senate chamber. In connection with these will be held the meetings of the attendant organizations that are in sympathy with the work to be discussed. The institute will open at 10 o'clock on the morning of the 12th with an address by the president, W. R. Losenby. This will be followed during the day and the next with addresses and discussions on subjects of interest.

The opening of the agricultural convention will be marked with an address of welcome by Governor Bushnell, followed by an address by the president of the state board of agriculture, J. C. Bower. Addresses of interest on subjects of importance to the members will follow. In the evening there will be an election of five members of the state board of agriculture. A number of speakers will be present from outside of the state. The convention is expected to be one of unusual importance and of great profit to the members.

You need Hood's Sarsaparilla to enrich and purify your blood, create an appetite and give sweet, refreshing sleep.

## DOWN IN A COAL MINE.

SIX MEN MEET AN UNTIMELY  
DEATH.

Another Man Reported Missing—  
Eight Men Rescued, Some of  
Them Badly Injured,

All May Recover—Afterdamp Pre-  
vents a Search Being Made  
of the Mine

For The Missing Body—Names of  
The Victims.

PRINCETON, Ind., Dec. 28.—One year ago the people of this section were celebrating the discovery of coal in this city. Today they mourn the death of seven men, caused by an explosion of gas, ignited in some manner unknown to those now alive.

Fifteen or sixteen men went down in

the mine to work on the new seam reported by the coal miners. This was the first time that the new seam was reached. The men were working in a very dangerous place, and the explosion was caused by a gas leak.

The explosion was caused by a gas leak, and the men were killed. The explosion was caused by a gas leak, and the men were killed. The explosion was caused by a gas leak, and the men were killed.

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## CHICAGO BANKER SUICIDED.

He Could Not Stand the Suffering Caused  
By Financial Failure.

CHICAGO, Dec. 28.—Suffering from depression caused by financial reverses, Otto Wassmansdorff, a well known banker of this city, yesterday fired a bullet into his brain and died almost instantly. Banker Wassmansdorff killed himself in a front hall bedroom at his home in Cleveland avenue at 11 o'clock in the morning. His sons, William G. and Otto, Jr., who were in the parlor beneath their father's bedroom, heard the report of the revolver and rushed upstairs. Running into the room the horrified sons beheld their father lying on the bed dying, a revolver lying at his side. He had shot himself in the right temple, and a tiny stream of blood was flowing down his cheek. Everything in the room was in perfect order. The deed apparently had been deliberately planned.

Mr. Wassmansdorff was a member of the private banking firm of Wassmansdorff & Heinsmann, which failed a week ago as a result of the failure of the National Bank of Illinois. The failure of his bank had a crushing effect upon Mr. Wassmansdorff and also seriously affected his wife, who is ill. The banker for several days was unable to eat or sleep. The criticism of unfortunate depositors weighed him down and he was in a constant troubled state of mind. Yesterday morning the banker appeared brighter and less troubled in mind than upon any other day since the financial crash that ruined him. After breakfast with his family, with whom he chatted pleasantly, he glanced over the morning papers. He then engaged in a frolic with his little grand daughter, after which he retired to his room. Fifteen minutes later the fatal shot was heard by the two sons.

**HER BODY INCINERATED.**  
Final Obsequies Over the Remains of the Late Kate Field.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 28.—The final obsequies over the remains of the late Kate Field were held in Trinity church yesterday afternoon. The large edifice was crowded to the doors with the most prominent people of the city, who assembled to do honor to the memory of the dead woman. The chancel, in front of which the casket rested, was a mass of plants and beautiful floral pieces, sent by people from all parts of the country. Governor Budd was represented by his staff in full uniform, and a number of foreign consuls, federal officials and the heads of all state and municipal departments were present.

**ENGLAND URGED TO INTERVENE.**  
A London Paper Wants Great Britain to Try to Adjust the Cuban Dispute.

LONDON, Dec. 28.—The attitude of the United States toward Cuba continues to be the most engrossing subject of discussion in political circles here and on the continent.

The leading London weeklies devote much space to the Cuban situation. The Statist thinks there is very little prospect that Spain will soon be able to assert her authority in Cuba and urges Great Britain, with or without the consent of some of the European powers, to offer her good offices to the United States and Spain.

The Statist attaches little importance to the general continental objection that the United States' right to interfere would be dangerous to every European government with possessions in America.

"Unless one or more of the great powers are prepared to forcibly oppose American intervention, a mere verbal objection will not carry weight. In case of war Spain will be absolutely cut off in the end. The best friends of Spain is he who tries to induce her to come to some arrangement in time."

**GERMANY HASN'T PROTESTED.**  
Official Denial That a Warning Has Been Sent to Uncle Sam.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—It can be denied officially and authoritatively that any European government, either directly or indirectly, has made any representation whatever to the United States to restrain or prevent its free action in connection with the Cuban insurrection. A similar report was denied by authority several weeks ago, and the latest denial results from a publication of a Paris dispatch in the London Times.

The London Times' dispatch was denied not only by the United States department of state, but also by the German government. The story to be idle newspaper gossip. Mr. A. von Bruning, the secretary of the German embassy, said, relative to the statement that Germany was already to oppose Spain's Spanish claims, that so far as the embassy here was concerned no such intimation had been received. He discredited the whole story. "We have not heard a word concerning Cuba," said he, "for three months."

**SANGUILY GETS EIGHT YEARS.**  
Naturalized American Convicted of Conspiracy Against Spain.

HAVANA, Dec. 28.—Saturday the reunited tribunal which judged the proceedings against Julio Sanguly, a naturalized American citizen, charged with conspiracy against Spain, opened its adjournment for the first time after the adjournment for the Christmas holidays. The judges decided that Sanguly was guilty of a modified qualification of the crime of which he was accused, and sentenced him to eight years and one day imprisonment. The sentence will be published next Monday.

Julio Sanguly was arrested with 30 others, including many members of well known families of Havana, and confined in Morro Castle. An attempt was made to try him by court martial, but through the efforts of Consul Ramon O. Williams, Sanguly's American citizenship was established, and he was given a civil trial.

**Texas Sharpshooters Forth.**  
New York, Dec. 28.—A special to The World from Key West, Fla., says:

## WEYLER IS REPULSED.

HE ATTACKS THE INSURGENT  
FORCES OF GENERAL RIVIERA.

Fifty Spanish Soldiers Killed—Gen-  
eral Riviera Uses His Dynamite  
Gun With Deadly Results.

England Urged to Intervene Be-  
tween the United States and  
Spain to Prevent a War.

Sanguily Gets Eight Years Impris-  
onment.

KEY WEST, Fla., Dec. 28.—Reports from Havana say that an attack was made on one of General Riviera's foot hill forts Friday by some of Weyler's forces, and that they were repulsed, the big dynamite gun belonging to General Riviera's command securing the victory for the insurgents. It is stated that over 50 men were lost on the Spanish side, and less in the Cuban ranks.

All information is refused in Havana, the officials stating that no such engagement took place. As this report came through the Cuban channels it is thought to be true.

Colonel San Martin's columns have been burning houses and destroying plantations all through the section south and west of Artemisa as far out as they dared venture. The past week over 300 houses and many plantations have been destroyed, 400 head of cattle secured and a number of tobacco fields and cane patches laid waste. Weyler's orders are to spare nothing.

A number of pacifics, it is reported, offered resistance to the taking of their cattle saying that their families would starve, and they were killed, over 25 instances having been recorded. General Riviera is taking great pains to verify all such cases, it is said, so that the entire facts can be reported to the American papers.

General Riviera's forces are increasing, and he has had accessions to his stock of arms and ammunition this week, an expedition having landed on the southern side of the island, from Honduras or Mexico. It is presumed an American correspondent, name unknown, has succeeded in getting through the Spanish lines and joining Riviera's column.

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